

Katy Ryan
kohearnr@gmail.com

PROFILE

- Educator and nonprofit leader with two decades of experience in higher education.
- Scholar with expertise in prison studies, U.S. American literature, writing instruction.
- Experienced liaison between educational institutions, correctional facilities, and community organizations.
- Successful executive leadership, including donor relations, grant-writing, community building, vision work, priority setting, restorative practices.
- Transparent, inclusive leader with proven capacity to attract committed, talented staff/volunteers and build a high-functioning compassionate organizational culture.
- Experienced public speaker and organizer

EDUCATION

PhD	English, University of Massachusetts, Amherst	2000
MA	English, St. Louis University	1993
BA	English, Boston College (<i>Summa Cum Laude</i>)	1990

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS at WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

Eberly Family Professor of Outstanding Teaching	2016 - present
Professor of English	2018 - present
Associate Professor of English	2007 - 2018
Assistant Professor of English	2000 - 2007

LEADERSHIP - Appalachian Prison Book Project (501c3)

President	2011 - 2014; 2020 - 2021
Education Coordinator	2018 - present
Work-Study Supervisor	2018 - 2020
Chair of the Executive Board	2011- 2018
Founder	2004

HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON EXPERIENCE

Director, WVU Higher Education in Prison Initiative	2021 - present
Building Bridges to a Better Community Certification	2021
Restorative Justice Facilitation Training with Kay Pranis	2020
Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program Certification	2016
Co-facilitator, Women's Prison Book Club	2014 - 2019
GED Prep/Reading and Writing, Federal Prison	Summer 2018

Awards

Kellogg Foundation Community Engagement Recognition (APBP)	2022
2020 Nonprofit of the Year <i>Appodlachie</i> (APBP)	2020
Barrelhouse Magazine Amplifier Award (APBP)	2019

Innovations in Reading National Book Foundation (APBP)	2018
Lydia Maria Child Society Social Justice Award	2018
Neil S. Bucklew Award for Social Justice	2014

Grants

Laughing Gull Foundation	2021 - 2023
Vireo Foundation	2020
WVU Foundation Women of WVU	2017
Appalachian Community Fund	2014
Co-Project Director, WV Humanities Council Major Grant	2013
WVU Public Service Grant	2007, 2008, 2009, 2010

Event Planning

Three-day Campus Visit, Renaldo Hudson	2022
Eberly Visions of Justice Series	
Convened session with Sr. Rosemary Nyirumbe	2020
Women Behind Bars Conference	
Invited keynote speaker Dwayne Betts	2020
James Madison University/APBP Service-Learning Weekend	2016, 2017
Helen Coast Hays Peace Lecture Series	2015
Educational Justice and Appalachian Prisons Symposium	2014
Forum with Delbert Tibbs, exonerated from death row	2005

Select Service to the Profession

Reviewer, <i>Journal of Higher Education in Prison</i>	2021
Copyeditor, <i>Stateville Speaks</i> , Illinois prison newspaper	2004 - 2010

TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

Awards

Sigma Tau Delta Outstanding Teaching Award	2017
James and Arthur Gabriel Brothers Faculty Award	2008
Teaching Award, English Graduate Organization	2008
WVU Foundation Outstanding Teacher Award	2007
WVU Eberly College Outstanding Teacher Award	2007

Grant

WVU Eberly Summer Course Development Grant	2014
Created ENGL 275: Justice and Literature	

Select Graduate Courses

ENGL 732	Current Directions in Literary Studies Carceral Studies
ENGL 731	American Studies Seminar
ENGL 691B	Advanced Topics: Inside-Out Prison Exchange Mentoring
ENGL 693B	Penalty of Death in U.S. American Literature
ENGL 693A	U.S. Literature of Imprisonment and Resistance
ENGL 648	Twentieth-Century American Literature

ENGL 631 Studies in Nonfiction Prose (Prison Autobiographies)

Select Undergraduate Courses

ENGL 496 Senior Thesis
WGST 393 Inside Out
ENGL 355 Multi-Ethnic Literature
ENGL 275 Justice and Literature
ENGL 254 African American Literature
ENGL 242 American Literature II: 1865-present
ENGL 131 Poetry and Drama
ENGL 102 Rhetoric and Composition

SEI Reports for All Courses Available. Key metrics average 4.9/5.0.

PRISON STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP

Edited Collections

Co-editor, *This Book is Free and Yours to Keep: Notes from the Appalachian Prison Book Project*. Forthcoming from WVU Press.

Editor, *Demands of the Dead: Executions, Storytelling, and Activism in the United States*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012. 330 pp.

Scholarly Blog

[“Where the Letters Lead](#): The Appalachian Prison Book Project.” *The Discipline at Modernism/Modernity* 29 Dec. 2020.

Scholarly Essays

With Valerie Surrent and Rayna Momen. “Reading and Writing between the Devil and the Deep Blue.” *Teaching Literature and Writing in Prison*. Eds. Patrick Alexander and Sheila Smith McCoy. Modern Language Association. Forthcoming.

“A Prison Nation and Freedom Dreams: 1980s Literature of Incarceration.” *American Literature in Transition: 1980-1990*. Ed. Quentin Miller. Cambridge University Press, 2017. 129-146.

“‘When Freedom Comes’: Maria Parker, the Women’s Department, and the West Virginia State Penitentiary.” *West Virginia History* 11.1 (Spring 2017): 1-27.

With Yvonne Hammond. “*Work & Hope* and the West Virginia State Penitentiary.” *West Virginia History* 11.1 (Spring 2017): 29-43.

“Prison, Time, *Kairos* in Langston Hughes’s *Scottsboro, Limited*.” *Modern Drama* 58.2 (June 2015): 171-193.

“A View from *The Brig*: From the Cage to the Street” in *Political and Protest Theatre after 9/11: Patriotic Dissent*. New York: Routledge 2012: 156-173.

"State Killing, the Stage of Innocence, and *The Exonerated*." *American Literature* 83.1 (March 2011): 121-151.

"Permeable Borders and American Prisons: Malcolm Braly's *On the Yard*." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 50.3 (2008): 285-303.

Interviews and Reviews

Review. Joy James, ed. *Warfare on the Homefront: Policing and Prison in a Penal Democracy* in *African American Review* 43.2-3 (2009): 528-530.

"Rebuilding the Common Good: [An Interview with Linda Kintz](#)." *ATHENews* (Oct. 2007).

Review of Marc C. Conner, ed. *The Aesthetics of Toni Morrison: Speaking the Unspeakable* in *African American Review*. 36.1 (2002): 166-67.

"Documentary Films on US Social Issues." *Humanities Collections* 1.2 (1999): 101-07.

Invited Lectures

"Educational Justice, Community Care, and the Appalachian Prison Book Project." Western Pennsylvania Undergraduate Literature Symposium Keynote Address. Univ. of Pittsburgh, Johnstown. March 2023.

"Mailing Books, Building Community." Furman University. 2021.

"Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy* and Abolitionist Educational Movements," West Virginia University Eberly College. Common Read Public Lecture. 2016

"A Book, Doing Time: Appalachian Prison Book Project and *Demands of the Dead*." Summer Community of Writers. Chatham University. 2014.

"Death Penalty in American Literature." Alderson-Broaddus University. 2013.

"Doubtful Security: The Death Penalty and American Performance." University of Utah. Tanner Humanities Center. 2009.

"Lessons from the Appalachian Prison Book Project." Homecoming Lectures. West Virginia University. Morgantown, WV. 2007.

Organized Conference Panels

"*Dear Appalachian Prison Book Project: A Book of Letters and Artwork*." Midwest Modern Language Association." Minneapolis. November 2022.

"Freeing Minds, Building Community." Poverty and the Criminal Justice System. WV Coalition for Criminal Law Reform. Morgantown, WV. January 2021.

Prison Abolition in Twentieth-Century American Autobiographical Literature. Modern Language Association Conference. Chicago. January 2014.

Innocence and Complicity. American Studies Association. Albuquerque. October 2008.

The Death Penalty and Twentieth-Century American Literature. Midwest Modern Language Association Conference. Cleveland. Nov. 2007.

Select Conference Presentations

“High Tech, Low Accountability: How Do We Fight Back Against Prison Tablets and Prison Censorship.” National Conference on Higher Education in Prison. Saint Louis 2019.

“Partnering with Other Related Groups.” Books to Prisoners National Conference. Boston. April 2019.

“Prison Book Clubs: Reading Utopias, Writing Worlds” (Pecha Kucha). *Imagining America*. Chicago. November 2018.

“Thirteen Years of Community Organizing: The Appalachian Prison Book Project.” Midwest Modern Language Association. Cincinnati. November 2017.

“*Work & Hope* and the West Virginia State Penitentiary.” Midwest Modern Language Association Conference. Cleveland. November 2015.

“Teaching Without a Net: Resources for Teachers in Nontraditional Classrooms.” Association for Writers and Writing Programs Conference. Minneapolis. March 2015.

“Maria Parker and the Women’s Department at the West Virginia State Penitentiary.” National Women’s Studies Association Conference. Cincinnati. November 2013.

“Lines Behind Bars: Poetry from Prisons Concrete and Intangible.” Split This Rock Conference. Washington, D.C. April 2014.

“Abolitionist Imagination and American Literature.” Rethinking Prisons Conference. Vanderbilt University 3-5 May 2013.

“Patriotic Dissent as Civic Engagement: Political and Protest Theatre after 9/11.” Association for Theatre in Higher Education Conference. Washington D.C. 2-5 August 2012.

“A View of *The Brig*: From the Cage to the Street.” American Studies Association Conference. Baltimore. 20-23 October 2011.

“Linking Prisons and Universities: A Roundtable Discussion.” American Studies Association Conference. San Antonio. 18-21 November 2010.

“The Death Penalty and Innocence on Trial.” American Studies Association Conference. Albuquerque. 16-19 October 2008.

“The Exonerated and the Executed.” Midwest Modern Language Association Conference. Cleveland. 8-11 November 2007.

“Barbarous Acts That Have Outraged the Conscience’: Human Rights and Twentieth-Century American Literature.” Midwest Modern Language Association Conference. Chicago. 6-9 November 2006.

“Performance and Public Policy: Contemporary Experiments in Democracy.” International Conference on Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations. New Orleans. 12-17 June 2006.

“Taking Time in Malcolm Braly’s *On the Yard*.” Pop Culture Association and American Culture Association Conference. San Diego. 23- 26 March 2005.

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

West Virginia Humanities Council Fellowship	2015
Visiting Research Fellow, Tanner Humanities Center, University of Utah	2008 - 2009
Harry Ransom Center Dorot Fellowship, University of Texas, Austin	2008
WVU Riggle Fellowship for the Humanities	2002
WVU Faculty Senate Research Grant	2001, 2015

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Additional Peer-Reviewed Articles

“Horizons of Grace: Marilynne Robinson and Simone Weil.” *Philosophy and Literature* 29.2 (Oct. 2005): 349-364. Rpt. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 276. Ed. Jeffrey Hunter (Detroit: Gale Group, 2009).

“Falling in Public: Larsen’s *Passing*, McCarthy’s *The Group*, and Baldwin’s *Another Country*.” *Studies in the Novel* 36.1 (Spring 2004): 95-119.

“Revolutionary Suicide in Toni Morrison’s Fiction.” *African American Review* 34.3 (2000): 389-412. Rpt. in *Critical Voices on Toni Morrison*. Eds. Meenakshi F. Paul and Khem Raj Sharma (New Delhi: Authors Press, 2015).

“No Less Human’: Making History in Suzan-Lori Parks’s *The America Play*.” *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 7.2 (May 1999): 81-94. Rpt. in *Dramatic Criticism* Vol. 23 (Detroit: Gale Group, 2004).

Moran, Charlie, et. al. “Opening the Classroom Door: Peer Visits in the Composition Classroom.” *Journal of Teaching Writing* 15.2 (Fall 1998): 175-193.

Review. Lucille Clifton, *The Terrible Stories* in *Sojourner: The Women’s Forum* Sept. 1997: 44.

Conferences

“Revolutionary Suicide in Toni Morrison’s Fiction.” International Conference on Narrative. Houston, TX. 8-11 March 2001.

“War, Women, and Colonialism in Performance.” National Women’s Studies Association. Boston, MA. 9–13 June 2000.

Creative Publications

“Assurance of God” (short story). *Denver Quarterly* 35.4 (2001): 121-27.

“A Body’s Mind Experience in Tim Miller’s Workshop” (personal essay). *Theatre Topics* 7.2 (Sept. 1997): 205-207.

“As For Now Passing” (poem). *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 21.1-2 (June 1993): 171-172.

Prizes

“The Seventh Circle” (personal essay). *Atlantic Monthly* Writing Contest. Third Prize. 1998.

Additional Graduate Teaching

ENGL 692	Directed Studies
ENGL 691A	Advanced Topics: Capstone Mentoring
ENGL 631	Studies in Nonfiction Prose
ENGL 634	Studies in Drama

Additional Undergraduate Teaching

ENGL 349	Contemporary American Literature
ENGL 348	Twentieth-Century American Literature
ENGL 342	American Drama
ENGL 337	Major Author: Samuel Beckett
ENGL 273	Contemporary British and American Literature
ENGL 234	Modern Drama
ENGL 200	Foundations in Literary Study

Service to College and University

Eberly College Faculty Advisory Committee	2020-2022
Eberly Public Outreach and Service Award	2017
Heebink Public Service Award	2015, 2016, 2017
Faculty Advisor, APBP Student Organization	2004-2014, 2016-2020
Faculty Senator	2007-2013
Student Rights and Responsibilities Committee	2013
Student Evaluation of Instruction Committee	2010
Public Service Grant Committee	2006
Women’s Studies Search Committee	2004
Faculty Advisor, <i>Iota Iota Iota</i>	2001-2003

Service to English Department

English Advisory Committee	2018-2021
Undergraduate Program Committee	2014-2018
Academic Advisor to Majors	2005-2007, 2011-2014
Faculty Evaluation Committee	2001-2002, 2007-2008, 2009-2011, 2013 - 2015, 2018
Faculty Search Committee	2002, 2012
M.A. Admissions Committee	2002, 2013, 2023
Ph.D. Admissions Committee	2005, 2016, 2018

Graduate Faculty Committee	2002, 2004
Seminar Committee	2004, 2010
Judge, Graduate Student Writing Contest	2006
Steering Committee, Student Literature Colloquium	2005
Judge, Ninth Annual Undergraduate Symposium	2001
Coordinator, Expository Writing Contest	2001
Service to the Profession	
Reviewer, <i>Studies in the Novel</i>	2022
Reviewer, <i>Meridians</i>	2021
Reviewer, <i>Pacific Coast Philology</i>	2017
Reviewer, <i>African American Review</i>	2006 - 2017
Reviewer, <i>MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the U.S.</i>	2013 - 2017
Reviewer, <i>Theatre Topics</i>	2000 - 2008
Assistant Editor, <i>Theatre Topics</i>	1996 - 1998, 1999 - 2000